

My name is Dominic Rapini from Branford, CT. I have first hand experience with the value and impact of the **Care 4 Kids** intent and the funding it provides. I also see, up close, the dangerously thin margins between being gainfully employed or being homeless.

Take the case of my friend Amanda - 22 year old mother of a one year old. Amanda is a DCF survivor, transitioning off of welfare and is being trained in a medical related field.

Amanda is independent with her own apartment and car with expenses of 1,200+ per month. Rent for example is \$850/mo.

Working two jobs her after tax income is \$1,560 a month. In order to work, she takes advantage of Care 4 Kids covering about 35hrs / month relieving her of \$980 monthly cost. Amanda has about \$360 leftover each month to buy food and formula. Without Care 4 Kids Amanda would -\$620 a month.

The math is simple. If Amanda, and the many others like her, lose subsidized day care her choices will be very clear. Work and leave her child with a unlicensed provider -friend, boy friend, family member and hope they do a good job —or she quits her job and takes care of her child full-time.

*Hope is not a strategy* - none of us can accept the option of gambling with a child's safety and prosperity with well meaning but untrained providers. How many times have we seen in the news a case of domestic violence by a friend watching someone else's child?

Quitting her job immediately impacts Amanda's ability to pay rent, buy food, and essentials. She will likely go homeless until welfare kicks in but may not even have the credit worthiness to get a new apartment or to renew the lease. In the end the following happens.

The State of Connecticut trades a program subsidy for a welfare payment with this budget cut, we have a new homeless family, and employer loses a vested employee and a single mother loses the dignity and security of gainful employment. In the business world we call this a Lose, Lose proposition.

**At present there are 12,800 families receiving day care subsidy from Care 4 Kids and just under 2,800 on the wait list. The wait list is trending towards 5,000 families requesting subsidy by the end of June. Failing just 10% of these families we risk adding 1,300+ parents and 1,300+ kids to the homeless ranks. Estimated at over 2,000 Connecticut citizens - and that is a conservative forecast.**

The citizens of Connecticut need for the Appropriations Committee, and the Legislature, to rebalance the TANF funds in favor of Car for Kids. \$9M re-invested in this program could save us \$13m to \$15M in welfare and comprehensive benefit payments. It could save CT employers thousands of lost employees and the training costs associated with them.

In the end, fully funding Care 4 Kids is a compassionate business decision, a humanitarian necessity, and the ultimate bi-partisan issue.

Sincerely, Dominic Rapini

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